

NASTY MESS ARISES BEFORE CITY GETS OLD LIGHT RATES

How the Commonwealth Edison Company makes a big clean-up of millions every year on Chicago users of electrical current was touched on again in a public discussion yesterday.

Aldermen Harding and Wilson met the trustees of the sanitary district board. The aldermen came from the city council with authority to make a contract for electrical current.

The sanitary district owns a three-million dollar electric power plant at Lockport. The city is already buying current for 23,000 lamps from this plant and for this the city pays five mills per kilowatt hour. Now 1,000 more lights are needed by the city and the aldermen met the trustees to fix a price and close up a contract for these 1,000 lights. The sanitary trustees, led by Thomas M. Sullivan, have been holding out for months, claiming that the rate to the city should be raised from five mills to five and nine-tenths mills.

A report of City Electrician Ray Palmer was brought in by the sanitary trustees to show that the rate is a fair one. Also, it was argued that the Commonwealth Edison Co. rate for the same service in the city is 7.7 mills.

This rate of the Edison Co. was ridiculed by minority Trustees Clark and Paullin, as the common, ordinary robber rate of public service corporation and not a rate which can be set up as a fair standard, based on operation cost and a "reasonable profit."

A report by Robert M. Buck, secretary to Trustees Clark and Paullin, was quoted. Costs of production, delivery and overhead are covered in this Buck report.

City Electrician Palmer is speared and his name hooked up with the Commonwealth Edison Co. repeatedly.

Palmer, who is on the city government payroll as expert on electricity, is described as having "obvious illu-

sions" in his statements. He is charged with ignorance in his official reports of some of the most important items in the problem.

The sanitary district is actually making money on the current it sells the city, according to the Buck report. To quote: "The profit on current sold to the city is actually so great that it more than absorbs the loss in operation and yields a new profit on the contract." Though the sanitary district lost about \$51,715.52 in 1912 on city sub-station operation, its revenues from the city for current and for operation was \$148,653.86 and made a profit of \$21,753.86 for the district.

These figures from the Buck report were again cited yesterday. E. W. Bemis, formerly Tom Johnson's public utility expert in Cleveland, and now expert for the city of Chicago in telephone and other public utility matters, was cited as endorsing the Buck report.

Broad hints were thrown out that the Commonwealth Edison Co. is back of the maneuvers to raise the rate for current sold to the city.

After an hour of jockeying and dickering without getting anywhere, Ald. George Harding got up and said to Trustee Sullivan: "Well, if you've got your mind made up that you won't give us the old rate, I'm not going to waste any time here."

He took his overcoat and was putting it on, when Sullivan said that, as only 1,000 lights were involved and such a small number wouldn't make much difference, he (Sullivan) would consent to the old rate. As Sullivan is known as the majority leader in the sanitary district board and what he says goes, Harding took his overcoat off and they sat down and drew a contract at the old rate of 5 mills.

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National Democratic Club fires Tammany Chief Murphy for non-payment of dues. Any Tammanyite so poor as that who returns \$25,000 contributions is bound to get in bad.